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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001634

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: OPPOSITION CHP'S GRATUITOUS
RESISTANCE CONTINUES

REF: ANKARA 1350

(U) Classified by Polcouns John Kunstadter; reasons: 1.5
(b)(d).

1. (C) Summary: Contacts from main opposition CHP say that although another UN resolution could influence some backbenchers, CHP is likely to continue to vote en bloc against U.S. troop deployment. Taking their cue from President Sezer, CHPers at all levels assert that any UNSC resolutionless operation would lack "international legitimacy", which they claim is required under the Turkish constitution. They also criticize the AK government's alleged failure to share detailed information with CHP on Turkey's role in post-Saddam Iraq. Bottom line: CHP is engaging in sterile opposition. End Summary.

CHP still looking for more "international legitimacy"

2. (C) In a March 7 meeting with Congressmen Wexler and Whitfield, CHP Chairman Deniz Baykal interpreted constitution art. 92 as requiring "international legitimacy" for any Parliamentary authorization to deploy U.S. troops to Turkey. "If you take the constitution seriously, then you could not support war in Iraq," he said. In any case, Baykal explained, bringing democracy to Iraq is a "utopian idea." Without a another UNSC resolution or a NATO-backed decision, CHP will remain opposed. Even then, CHP may not change its position, but a second resolution "will help."

3. (C) March 11 ANAP Central Board member and former minister Vehbi Dincerler explained to us that he had contacted former ambassador and senior CHP deputy Sukru Elekdag to discuss art. 92. Dincerler, who was in Parliament during the Gulf War, argued to Elekdag that international legitimacy applies only to declarations of war. According to Dincerler, Elekdag simply shrugged, saying "as a lawyer, you would know better than myself." Dincerler is an engineer.

4. (C) CHP M.P. and Human Rights Committee member Engin Altay told poloff March 10 that TGS chief Ozkok's March 8 public statement endorsing passage of a deployment resolution could play a role in changing the minds of individual CHP deputies. Nevertheless, he explained, Baykal's position against the deployment of U.S. troops is clear and is not likely to change.

AK isn't sharing

5. (C) In recent conversations, CHP deputies complained to poloff that the AK Government is not sharing enough detailed information on either the political statement, military MOU, and economic package negotiated with the U.S. or Turkey's role in a post-Saddam Iraq. Baykal told Congressmen Wexler and Whitfield that his party has "no idea about the big picture" in Iraq. CHP M.P. and Foreign Affairs Committee member Emin Koc claimed that in the March 1 closed session, the GOT failed to answer even the most basic questions from CHP on the state of negotiations with the U.S. Koc suggested that AK's reluctance to share more information reflected Erdogan's and Gul's overconfidence in their ability to deliver AK's Parliamentary group. In a March 4 conversation, senior CHP M.P. and long-time pollster Bulent Tanla, who has helped to lead the anti-deployment efforts together with Islamist columnist Fehmi Koru and others, asserted that AK's failure to communicate better with CHP directly led to CHP's decision to vote en bloc against the Parliamentary motion.

Vague apologies for Sav

16. (C) Reftel reported CHP General Secretary Onder Sav's March 1 remarks in the open session of Parliament -- carried on live television -- in which he called U.S. ships off the Turkish coast "ships of the enemy." Since then CHP M.P.s -- including Altay, Koc, and Tanla -- have offered reluctant apologies for Sav's statement, while professing their friendship with the U.S. Notably, Baykal offered no such apology in his meeting with Congressmen Wexler and Whitfield.

Comment: Bleating rings hollow

17. (C) CHP's continued harping on "international legitimacy" and complaints about alleged poor communication from AK overshadow what appears to be the party's ultimate goal in opposing a war in Iraq: humiliating the AK government. Altay self-servingly claimed that if CHP were in power, it would support the USG without hesitation. However, as the party in the minority, he averred, "we have to vote against the government's policies." Altay hinted that the U.S. should be happy to have AK in power during this sensitive time, because AK is able to keep a lid on religious groups. If CHP were in power, he said, these groups would be leading huge protests against the war and government. Bottom line: CHP continues to play a cynical, negative-value-added game.
PEARSON